

## Message Text

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ACTION ORM-01

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 IO-10 ISO-00 SR-02 AID-05 CIAE-00

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FM USMISSION GENEVA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3115

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

USINT BAGHDAD

UNCLAS GENEVA 3761

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SREF, IR, IZ

SUBJECT: IRAQI KURDS

FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF RECENT WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES  
RELEASE CONCERNING THE REHABILITATION OF KURDS IN IRAQ:

QUOTE: "THE SITUATION IN THE KURDISH REGION OF IRAQ SEEMS  
TO BE RETURNING TO NORMAL QUICKLY AND THERE ARE MANY SIGNS  
OF THE ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT OF THE IRAQI GOVERNMENT IN  
REHABILITATION PROGRAMS FOR RETURNING KURDS AS WELL AS IN  
REBUILDING THE WAR-AFFECTED AREAS" A WCC TEAM MAINTAINED  
HERE ON ITS RETURN FROM IRAQ.

THE TEAM, CONSISTING OF MR. NINAN KOSHY OF THE  
COMMISSION OF THE CHURCHES ON INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS AND  
MR. STANLEY MITTON, EMERGENCIES OFFICER OF THE COMMISSION  
ON INTER-CHURCH AID, REFUGEE AND WORLD SERVICE, SPENT 10  
DAYS IN THE KURDISH AREA OF NORTHERN IRAQ AT THE INVITATION  
OF THE IRAQI GOVERNMENT AND MADE EXTENSIVE VISITS  
THROUGHOUT THE REGION.

MAKING THEIR OWN SCHEDULE AND CHOOSING THE PLACES  
TO BE VISITED, THEY TRAVELLED BY CAR AND HELICOPTER  
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ALONG THE TURKISH AND IRANIAN BORDERS.

IN DISCUSSION WITH KURDS WHO HAVE RETURNED TO THE AREA, FORMER TROOPS OF MULLA MUSTAFA BARZANI, THE KURDISH MILITARY LEADER, AND SEVERAL LOCAL OFFICIALS WHO HAD DEFECTED BUT WHO HAVE RETURNED AND BEEN REINSTATED, THE WCC TEAM WAS ASSURED THAT SINCE THE CESSATION OF FIGHTING IN MARCH THE IRAQI AUTHORITIES HAVE SCRUPULOUSLY IMPLEMENTED THE TERMS OF THE AMNESTY DECREE AND THAT "THERE HAS BEEN NO DISTINCTION MADE ON THE BASIS OF RELIGIOUS OR POLITICAL BELIEFS IN THE APPLICATION OF THE DECREE."

THE TEAM WAS ABLE TO VISIT DAHOK, ZAKHO, BATUFA, KANI MASI, SARASANG, AMADYA, BAIBU, BARZAN, ARBIL, GALI ALI BEG, HAJ UMRAN, GALALA AND SHIRWANT MAZIN, WHICH WERE IN THE HEART OF THE AREAS CONTROLLED BY BARZANI'S TROOPS. THEY FOUND NO EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT SOME ALLEGATIONS OF KILLINGS, CONCENTRATION CAMPS OR STARVATION.

EVEN IN SOME OF THE WORST AFFECTED AREAS SUCH AS ROWANDUZ AND GALALA ALMOST ALL OF THE PEOPLE HAVE RETURNED TO THEIR HOMES, SCHOOLS ARE REOPENED AND THE SHOPS FILLED WITH BASIC NECESSITIES. RECONSTRUCTION IS UNDER WAY. THE TEAM ALSO SAW LARGE NUMBERS OF ARMY CONVOYS ON THEIR WAY BACK TO BAGHDAD.

THE TEAM WAS TOLD THAT THE MAJORITY OF THE REFUGEES HAVE ALREADY RETURNED AND THAT THERE ARE PRESENTLY SOME 50,000 REFUGEES LEFT IN IRAN. IT WOULD NOT, HOWEVER, BE SURPRISING IF LARGE NUMBERS OF THOSE REMAINING IN IRAN, ESPECIALLY THE COREGROUP OF BARZANI'S FOLLOWERS, PREFERRED TO STAY.

AT HAJ UMRAN, THE MAIN CHECK POINT ON THE IRANIAN BORDER, THE TEAM NOTICED ONLY MINIMUM FORMALITIES WERE REQUIRED FOR RETURNING REFUGEES. A SPECIAL MISSION HEADED BY THE MINISTER OF YOUTH, MR. NAEEM HADDAD, WAS IN IRAN RECENTLY TO EXPLAIN UNCLASSIFIED

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THE POLICIES OF HIS GOVERNMENT WITH REGARD TO THE AMNESTY AND TO ENCOURAGE THOSE REMAINING TO RETURN. SINCE THE WCC TEAM LEFT IRAQ THE AMNESTY HAS IN FACT BEEN EXTENDED UNTIL THE END OF JUNE.

THE TWO WCC REPRESENTATIVES ALSO UNDERLINED THAT BECAUSE OF THE HIGH PRIORITY GIVEN TO THE REHABILITATION PROGRAM BY THE IRAQI GOVERNMENT AND THE AMPLE

RESOURCES AT ITS DISPOSAL THERE WOULD BE NO NEED FOR ASSISTANCE BY OUTSIDE AGENCIES.

"WE RECEIVED THE IMPRESSION THAT THE PRESENT LEADERSHIP OF THE IRAQI GOVERNMENT REALIZES THAT THE GENUINE ASPIRATIONS OF THE KURDISH PEOPLE HAD NOT BEEN FULLY RECOGNIZED IN THE PAST AND THAT THERE HAD BEEN GRAVE ERRORS ON BOTH SIDES. WE FEEL THE GOVERNMENT WILL STRIVE TO ENSURE THAT THE KURDS PLAY A MORE IMPORTANT ROLE THAN EVER BEFORE IN THE MAIN-STREAM OF IRAQI NATIONAL LIFE WHILE BEING ENCOURAGED TO MAINTAIN AND DEVELOP THEIR CULTURAL HERITAGE AND IDENTITY", MR. KOSHY REPORTED ON HIS RETURN.

IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE WCC TEAM, THE FIRST DELEGATION OF AN INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION TO BE INVITED TO VISIT THE KURDISH REGION AFTER THE DECLARATION OF THE AMNESTY, IRAQI MINISTERS, INCLUDING MR. HADDAD AND MR. TARIQ AZIZ, MINISTER OF INFORMATION, STRESSED THAT SAFEGUARDING THE LEGITIMATE RIGHTS OF ALL MINORITIES IN THE AREA IS A SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO THE WIDER CAUSE OF PEACE WITH JUSTICE IN THE MIDDLE EAST.

THE TEAM MET MANY CHRISTIANS IN THE VISITED AREAS AND HAD MEETINGS IN BAGHDAD WITH METROPOLITAN SANHARIB BACHIR IWAS OF THE SYRIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH AND THE APOSTOLIC PRONUNCIO. UNQUOTE. DALE

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